



## **Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Monthly Update**

November 1 - 30, 2008

The following is a summary of Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Project activities in Arizona on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests (ASNF) and Fort Apache Indian Reservation (FAIR) and in New Mexico on the Apache National Forest (ANF) and Gila National Forest (GNF). Non-tribal lands involved in this Project are collectively known as the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area (BRWRA). Additional Project information can be obtained by calling (928) 339-4329 or toll free at (888) 459-9653, or by visiting the Arizona Game and Fish Department Web site at <http://www.azgfd.gov/wolf> or by visiting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Web site at <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf>. Past updates may be viewed on either Web site, or interested parties may sign up to receive this update electronically by visiting <http://www.azgfd.gov/signup>. This update is a public document and information in it can be used for any purpose. The Reintroduction Project is a multi-agency cooperative effort among the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD), New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF), USDA Forest Service (USFS), USDA-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services (USDA-APHIS WS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the White Mountain Apache Tribe (WMAT). Other entities, including private individuals and nongovernmental organizations, cooperate through the Project's Adaptive Management Work Group (AMWG) that meets periodically in Arizona and New Mexico.

To view weekly wolf telemetry flight location information or the 3-month wolf distribution map, please visit <http://www.azgfd.gov/wolf>. On the home page, go to the "Wolf Location Information" heading on the right side of the page near the top and scroll to the specific location information you seek.

**Please report any wolf sightings or suspected livestock depredations to:** (928) 339-4329 or toll free at (888) 459-9653. To report incidents of take or harassment of wolves, please call the AGFD 24-hour dispatch (Operation Game Thief) at (800) 352-0700.

**Numbering System:** Mexican wolves are given an identification number recorded in an official studbook that tracks their history. Capital letters (M = Male, F = Female) preceding the number indicate adult animals 24 months or older. Lower case letters (m = male, f = female) indicate wolves younger than 24 months or pups. The capital letter "A" preceding the letter and number indicate alpha wolves.

**Definitions:** A "wolf pack" is defined as two or more wolves that maintain an established territory. In the event that one of the two alpha (dominant) wolves dies, the remaining alpha wolf, regardless of pack size, retains the pack status. The packs referenced in this update contain

at least one wolf with a radio telemetry collar attached to it. The Interagency Field Team (IFT) recognizes that wolves without radio telemetry collars may also form packs. If the IFT confirms that wolves are associating with each other and are resident within the same home range, they will be referenced as a pack.

## **CURRENT POPULATION STATUS**

At the end of November 2008, the collared population consisted of 29 wolves with functional radio collars dispersed among 13 packs and one single wolf. Some other uncollared wolves are known to be associating with radio-collared wolves, and others are separate from known packs.

Project personnel conducted a translocation of a single wolf and an initial release of two wolves within the BRWRA in November. On November 6, personnel translocated a single wolf – M922 – into the Gila Wilderness near Burnt Corral Canyon. This translocation was implemented to potentially provide a mate for F1040, a wolf whose radio-collar signal disappeared in the same area in 2007. On November 17, personnel released a new pair of wolves – F836 and M1039 – near Middle Mountain on the ASNF in Arizona. The male was born in the wild in 2006. Project biologists captured it this past spring after it became ensnared in a leg-hold trap which was lawfully set by a trapper in New Mexico. The female was born in 2003 at the Minnesota Zoo, a participant in the Mexican wolf captive breeding program. Both wolves, especially the female, have genetic characteristics that will enhance the free-ranging wolf population currently in the wild.

### **IN ARIZONA:**

#### **Bluestem Pack (collared AF521, AM806 and F1042)**

Throughout November, the IFT located the Bluestem Pack in its traditional territory on the ASNF and the FAIR.

#### **Hawks Nest Pack (collared M1044, AF1110 and mp1155)**

Throughout November, the IFT located the Hawks Nest Pack in its traditional territory on the ASNF.

#### **Paradise Pack (collared AM795)**

Throughout November, AM795 continued to be located primarily within the Paradise Pack's traditional territory on the ASNF and the FAIR. This male wolf's wider-ranging movements in November indicate that it is actively looking for a female wolf. Towards the end of the month, the IFT located AM795 in the vicinity of Lofer Pack member AF1056 on the WMAT.

#### **Rim Pack (collared AF858 and AM1107)**

Throughout November, the IFT located the Rim Pack within its traditional home range in the central portion of the ASNF.

#### **Moonshine Pack (collared F836 and M1039)**

From November 17 to 21, the IFT located the pair in the vicinity of the Middle Mountain release pen on the ASNF. For the remainder of November, the pair has been traveling separately, with F836 located on the western portion of the GNF in New Mexico and M1039 located on the ASNF in Arizona.

**M619 (collared)**

The IFT located M619 in the central portion of the ASNF and western portion of the GNF during November.

**ON THE FAIR:****Bacho Pack (collared AM990 and fp1154)**

Throughout November, the IFT located the Bacho Pack on the FAIR.

**Lofer Pack (collared F1056)**

Throughout November, the IFT located the Lofer Pack on the FAIR. Towards the end of the month, the IFT located AF1056 in the vicinity of AM795 on the WMAT.

**IN NEW MEXICO:****Dark Canyon (collared AM992, AF923 and mp1160)**

Throughout November, the IFT located the Dark Canyon Pack within its traditional territory in the west-central portion of the GNF.

**Laredo Pack (collared AF1028)**

Throughout November, the IFT documented AF1028 north of the Gila Wilderness in the central portion of the GNF. AF1028 has also been intermittently located in the vicinity of the Dark Canyon Pack in the west-central portion of the GNF.

**Luna Pack (collared F1118 and M1156)**

Throughout November, the IFT located the Luna Pack in its traditional territory in the central portion of the GNF.

**Middle Fork Pack (collared AM871, AF861 and F1115)**

Throughout November, the IFT located the Middle Fork Pack in the northern portion of the Gila Wilderness and central portion of the GNF. Female wolf F1115 has continued to travel separately from the other members of the Middle Fork Pack, and its movements this month have ranged further from the main pack than the prior month. These movements indicate that it is dispersing from the pack and actively looking for a male wolf.

**San Mateo Pack (collared AF903 and AM1114)**

Throughout November, the IFT located the San Mateo Pack in the north-central portion of the GNF.

**Fox Mountain Pack (collared AM1038, mp1157 and mp1158)**

Throughout November, the IFT located the Fox Mountain Pack in the northwestern portion of the ASNF and the western portion of the GNF.

**M922 (Collared)**

On November 6, the IFT released M922 into the Gila Wilderness in New Mexico in the vicinity of Burnt Corral Canyon. The IFT noted a mortality signal from the collar of M922 in mid-November. Law enforcement personnel removed the carcass, and are investigating the death.

## **MORTALITIES**

In mid-November, the IFT found M922 dead northeast of the Gila Wilderness in New Mexico. Law enforcement agents investigated the scene and collected the carcass for necropsy. This case is under investigation.

## **INCIDENTS**

The IFT investigated one potential depredation incident during the month of November. On November 29, WS and USFWS personnel investigated an incident involving three alpacas near Mule Creek, New Mexico. Two of the alpacas were killed and a third sustained injuries. The investigation revealed that the animals were attacked and killed by domestic dogs.

On November 10, the management decision extension issued by the Adaptive Management Oversight Committee (AMOC) on October 27, authorizing the IFT to continue efforts to dart or trap AM1114 in New Mexico, expired without the successful capture of the wolf. The original management decision originated from two confirmed livestock depredations that were assigned to the wolf on September 10. On September 12, AMOC issued the original management decision directing the IFT to trap M1114 and translocate the wolf into the Gila Wilderness in New Mexico. Since the cessation of efforts to trap the wolf, no additional depredation incidents have been assigned to this wolf. If subsequent depredations occur in New Mexico between November 11, 2008, and June 27, 2009, and are definitively assigned to AM1114, the USFWS Regional Director will recommend immediate issuance of a Removal Order (authorizing use of all available means), pending discussion with the NMDGF Director.

## **CAPTIVE MANAGEMENT**

During the month of November, Sevilleta Wolf Management Facility personnel performed annual exams on 25 wolves housed at both the Sevilleta facility and Ladder Ranch Wolf Management Facility. Annual exams include a brief veterinary exam for overall health, as well as the administration of vaccines. Additionally, due to limited space at the Sevilleta and Ladder Ranch facilities and the inability to separate males and females during the breeding season, personnel administered Deslorelin to five females. Deslorelin is a drug that induces ovulation in the female prior to when male wolves are fertile, thus preventing breeding and allowing the pack to remain together during the breeding season.

## **COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION**

No significant communication and coordination occurred during the month of November.

## **PROJECT PERSONNEL**

Cheyenne Burnett, a volunteer with the USFWS, left her position with the Project. Thank you, Cheyenne, for your dedicated efforts!

On November 13, Ben and Carrie Cook joined the Project as volunteers for the USFWS. The Project relies heavily on volunteers to perform critical tasks, and we appreciate the hard work they perform. Welcome, Ben and Carrie!

### **REWARDS OFFERED**

The USFWS is offering a reward of up to \$10,000, the AGFD Operation Game Thief is offering a reward of up to \$1,000, and the NMDGF is offering a reward of up to \$1,000 for information leading to the conviction of the individual(s) responsible for the shooting deaths of Mexican wolves. A variety of non-governmental organizations and private individuals have pledged an additional \$40,000 for a total reward amount of up to \$52,000, depending on the information provided.

Individuals with information they believe may be helpful are urged to call one of the following agencies: USFWS special agents in Mesa, Arizona, at (480) 967-7900, in Alpine, Arizona, at (928) 339-4232, or in Albuquerque, New Mexico, at (505) 346-7828; the WMAT at (928) 338-1023 or (928) 338-4385; AGFD Operation Game Thief at (800) 352-0700; or NMDGF Operation Game Thief at (800) 432-4263. Killing a Mexican wolf is a violation of the Federal Endangered Species Act and can result in criminal penalties of up to \$50,000, and/or not more than one year in jail, and/or a civil penalty of up to \$25,000.